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DCI Talking Points
CIA/American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
Conference on Soviet Threat Technology
Tuesday, 8 April 1986
CIA Headquarters Auditorium

1. The Soviets are pursuing an ambitious, large-scale military Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) program. They are producing an increasing number of highly capable, innovative, and cost-effective weapons and related systems that will present a growing challenge to US researchers and designers of offensive and defensive systems. The fruits of the extensive Soviet program are outlined to some extent in two documents which all of you have--the 1986 version of SOVIET MILITARY POWER and CIA's Congressional testimony of last year on Soviet strategic force developments. As the pace of technology developments quickens, Intelligence Community inputs to and interaction with US RDT&E community will necessarily become increasingly important.

2. This symposium fills a need that is not met by any other program. Although other AIAA sponsored meetings are held at the SECRET/NOFORN level, none covers the broad range of military technologies that this does; further, none covers the state of Soviet developments. The classification level allows an exchange of information that goes beyond open literature surveys, and the inclusion of Intelligence Community speakers gives authority to the discussions. We hope to expand on many of the areas of Soviet military progress that are detailed in SOVIET MILITARY POWER and the Congressional testimony reprint. Indeed, one of those who testified, Dr.

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Larry Gershwin, my National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs, will be one of your speakers. The wide-ranging technical dialogue we expect to come out of this symposium is needed between the engineers and scientists in the Intelligence Community and those in the defense RDT&E community (our principal audience).

3. This classified symposium will provide to a large and important audience a greater appreciation and understanding of Soviet technological advances and innovations. Many of these are the result of, or were hastened by, the Soviet acquisition of Western technology, both hardware and information. The vast Soviet effort to acquire the "best of the west" is outlined in the White Paper, SOVIET ACQUISITION OF MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT WESTERN TECHNOLOGY: AN UPDATE, which we also have provided for you. One of the lectures will be on this most important aspect of Soviet threat technologies. The speaker will be who is currently the Director of the Office of Scientific and Weapons Research, and who once led CIA's Technology Transfer Assessment Center.

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4. Not to be overlooked in the dialogue we hope to engender is the possibility for 'reverse' tech transfer. The work of Soviet engineers and scientists in many of the areas to be addressed in the symposium may merit consideration by US laboratories and defense industries. This is something you can tell us.

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5. Determining the nature and scope of foreign scientific and technical developments is challenging, perhaps one of the most challenging assignments for an engineer or scientist. The men and women with these backgrounds who follow science, technology, and weapons at CIA and the other agencies of the Intelligence Community are among the best. Only by getting the best together--those from industry, academia, and the government--can the US hope to come up with timely, effective, and affordable responses to the Soviet challenge. That's why we are all here together.

6. Today, your program is focused on subjects critical to our maintaining the balance of strategic forces which is threatened by the new, more accurate, and mobile missiles which the Soviets began to deploy last year and will be deploying between now and the mid-nineties. This balance is also threatened by the additional missile defenses they are capable of deploying during that same period.

7. After looking over the roster of you who are visiting our headquarters, I'd like to mention a couple of additional concerns on which we would like to tap the range of knowledge and experience in industry, academia, think tanks and of technologies represented here today.

8. When the President made the speech which was quickly labeled "Star Wars," he stressed the prospect of applying emerging technologies to developing conventional defenses, as well as strategic defense, which could offset effective, and perhaps obsolete, the preponderance of tanks, planes and guns held today by the Warsaw Pact forces. Indeed, if and when effective strategic defense emerges to reduce the nuclear threshold and balance of terror, more effective conventional defenses will be needed to maintain the overall balance.

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9. Also, it is not news to you that we face today a new form of aggression in state terrorism as an instrument of power. We are already seeing international terrorism as a war without boundaries, and at the same time rapidly becoming more technologically proficient. Last Saturday, the Secretary of State had a dozen scientists in for a four-hour session on what technology can do to enhance our conventional defense and counter-terrorism, as well as our intelligence and strategic capabilities. A lot of thought and work is needed there. Clearly it cannot be accomplished without the kind of support that the people in this room can provide.

10. With those quick thoughts about our future agenda, I will let you turn to your very full two-day schedule. I hope you are able to take the time to see some of our campus and facilities. If you have any questions about the Agency or our work, please ask your CIA hosts. Another of the brochures we have for you explains the type of work our analysts do, the backgrounds we look for, and the careers in intelligence analysis that are available - careers that we think make a difference. I hope you enjoy the next two days here at CIA as well as find them stimulating and informative.

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